

REMARKS

Claims 1-14 are pending in this application.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-14 under 35 USC 103 over Hirano (US Pat. 6,460,642) in view of Sakurai (JP 2004 104918). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

It is noted that the publication date of Sakurai is April 2, 2004, which is after Applicants' claimed priority date of April 9, 2003. Attached hereto is a translation of priority document JP Application 2003-105172, which was filed on April 9, 2003 in the Japanese Patent Office. The current application claims priority from this application under 35 USC 119. The claim for priority was filed with this US application on March 17, 2004. It is believed that the claims of the current application are entitled to the filing date of the Japanese priority application.

Accordingly, it is asserted that Sakurai is not prior art against the current application. Further, Hirano is missing at least one feature of the claimed invention as admitted in the Office Action. Therefore, Hirano cannot render obvious any claims of the application. Withdrawal of the rejection is therefore requested.

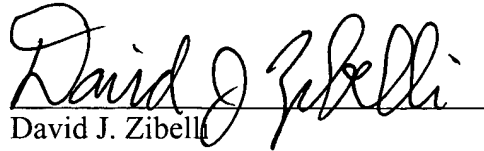
In view of the above, Applicant's submit that the application is in condition for allowance. Prompt consideration and allowance are solicited.

The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned at (202) 220-4200 to discuss any information concerning this application.

The Office is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or § 1.17 or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-0600.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: April 26, 2005

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David J. Zibelli", written over a horizontal line.

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